

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed July 2, 2004, claims 35, 42, and 52 have been canceled without prejudice; claims 1-5, 7, 9-16, 19, 21-27, 29-34, 36-41, 43-51, 54-60, 67, and 69 have been amended; and claims 71 – 78 have been added.

Therefore, claims 1-34, 36-41, 43-51, and 53-78 are pending. Support for the instant amendments is provided throughout the as-filed specification. Thus, no new matter has been added. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following comments, allowance of all pending claims is requested.

A. I.D.S.

An I.D.S. was filed by Applicants on May 28, 2004. To date, however, Applicants have not received a copy of the Form PTO-1449 signed by the Examiner indicating that this I.D.S. was considered. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 for this submission with the next Office Action.

B. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner's allowance of claims 21-24, 26, 28-30, 36-41, 43-47, 53-56, 59, 61-66 and 70 is appreciated. Furthermore, the Examiner's indication of allowability of claims 1, 2-20, 25, 27, 31-35, 42, 48-52, 57, 58, 60, 67, and 69 is noted with appreciation. As indicated below, Applicants have amended these allowable claims to conform with 35 U.S.C. §112.

In addition to the examiner's reasons for indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants wish to note that other patentable distinctions exist between the claims and the references of record.

C. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Examiner has objected to claim 1 for alleged informalities. Applicants have amended claim 1 without affecting the substance thereof. As such, withdrawal of this objection is requested.

D. CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-20, 25, 27, 31-35, 42, 48-52, 57, 58, 60 and 67-69 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failure to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. *See* Office Action pgs. 2-6. Without agreeing with the necessity for the amendments, the claims have been amended solely to expedite prosecution.

The amendments to the claims and the above comments are believed to address each of the Examiner's points.

CONCLUSION

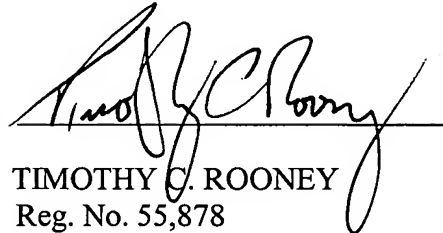
Having addressed each of the foregoing objections and rejections, it is submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the pending objections and rejections and indicate the allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

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